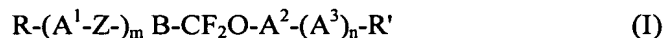


This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) Process for the preparation of a compound of the general formula



in which

R is alkyl, in which one or more CH₂ groups may be replaced, independently of one another, by O, CF₂, CH=CH, CH=CF or CF=CF, with the proviso that peroxide structures O-O and formaldehyde acetals OCH₂-O are excluded,

A¹ is, independently of one another, 1,4-cyclohexylene, 2,5-1,3-dioxanylene, 1,3-cyclobutylene or



A² and A³ are 1,4-phenylene, in which, independently of one another, from one to four hydrogens may be replaced by fluorine or one or two CH groups may be replaced by N,

Z is a single bond, -CH₂-CH₂-, -CF₂-CF₂-, -CH=CH-, -CF=CF-, -CH=CF- or -CF=CH-,

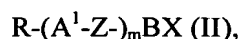
B is 2,6-disubstituted naphthalene, 2,6-disubstituted 5,6,7,8-tetrahydronaphthalene or 2,6-disubstituted trans-decalin,

R' is R, F, OCF₃, OCF₂H, CF₃, Cl, SF₅, CN or NCS, and

m and n are, independently of one another, 0 or 1,

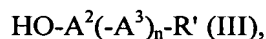
comprising the following steps:

- a) conversion of a compound of the general formula



in which X is halogen or =O and the other symbols are as defined in relation to the formula (I), into a carboxylic acid derivative with elimination of the group X and introduction of a C1 unit;

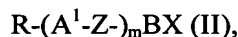
- b) reaction of the carboxylic acid derivative with a phenol of the general formula



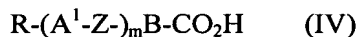
in which A^2 , A^3 , R' and n are as defined in relation to the formula (I), to give the compound of the formula (I).

2. (Original) Process according to Claim 1, characterised in that step a) is carried out as follows:

- a') conversion of a compound of the general formula



in which X is a halogen and the other symbols are as defined in relation to the formula (I), into the corresponding Grignard compound, reaction of the resultant Grignard compound with CO_2 , and hydrolysis to the corresponding carboxylic acid of the formula



or a salt thereof.

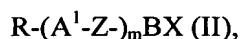
3. (Currently Amended) Process according to Claim ~~1 or 2~~, characterised in that X in the formula (II) is selected from the group consisting of Cl, Br and I and is particularly preferably Br.
4. (Currently Amended) Process according to ~~one of Claims 1 to 3~~ Claim 1, characterised in that, for the preparation of the Grignard compound, a compound of the formula (II)

in which B = 2,6-decalinyl, 2,6-tetrahydronaphthyl or 2,6-naphthyl is reacted with magnesium in a solvent which comprises at least one nonpolar solvent and at least one polar solvent, with external supply of heat.

5. (Currently Amended) Process according to ~~one of Claims 1 to 4~~ Claim 1, characterised in that the reaction of the Grignard compound is carried out with gaseous O_2 .
6. (Currently Amended) Process according to ~~one of Claims 1 to 5~~ Claim 1, characterised in that the esters are obtained from the acids (IV) and the phenols of the formula (III) $HO-A^2(-A^3)_n-R'$, in which A^2 , A^3 , R' and n are as defined in relation to the formula (I), by reaction under water-eliminating conditions.
7. (Currently Amended) Process according to ~~one of Claims 1 to 6~~ Claim 1, characterised in that the ethers (I) are obtained from the esters by conversion into the bisalkylthionium salts (V) and reaction thereof with the phenol (III) in an oxidative fluorodesulfuration.
8. (Original) Process according to Claim 7, characterised in that the carboxylic acid (IV) is reacted with a preferably cyclic alkylthiol, in particular from the group consisting of ethanedithiol, propanedithiol and 1,2-benzenedithiol, to give the bisalkylthionium salt.
9. (Currently Amended) Process according to ~~one of Claims 1 to 8~~ Claim 1, characterised in that the oxidant employed in the fluorodesulfuration is a compound which liberates halonium equivalents, preferably from the group consisting of dibromohydantoin, dimethyldibromohydantoin, N-bromosuccinimide, N-iodosuccinimide, 1,3-dibromo-5,5-dimethylhydantoin, SO_2Cl_2 , SO_2ClF , nitrosonium and nitronium salts, chloramine T and bromine, particularly preferably bromine.
10. (Currently Amended) Process according to ~~one of Claims 1 to 9~~ Claim 1, characterised in that the fluorinating agent is selected from aliphatic and aromatic amine/ hydrogen fluoride complexes, pyridine/hydrogen fluoride complexes, $NEt_3 \cdot 3HF$, 50% HF in pyridine, melamine \cdot HF and polyvinylpyridine \cdot HF.
11. (Currently Amended) Process according to ~~one of Claims 1 to 10~~ Claim 1, characterised in that the ester is reacted with a fluorinating agent in the presence of an oxidant, preferably a brominating agent, to give the ethers (I) with formation of the thioesters as intermediates.

12. (Original) Process according to Claim 1, characterised in that step a) is carried out as follows:

a'') conversion of a compound of the general formula



in which X is an =O group, into a bis(alkylthio)carbenium salt by reaction with a suitable sulfur-containing compound.

13. (Original) Process according to Claim 12, characterised in that a ketene dithioketal is prepared by reaction of (II) with a 2silyl-1,3-dithiane, which may be optionally substituted, preferably 2-trimethylsilyl-1,3-dithiane, in the presence of a deprotonating compound, preferably alkyl lithium, particularly preferably ~~butyl~~ lithium, and is subsequently converted into a bis(alkylthio)carbenium salt, preferably by acidification.
14. (Currently Amended) Process according to Claim ~~12 or 13~~, characterised in that the acid employed for the protonation is one of the general formula HY^+ , preferably trifluoromethanesulfonic acid or tetrafluoroboric acid/diethyl ether complex.
15. (Currently Amended) Process according to ~~one of Claims 12 to 14~~ Claim 12, characterised in that the bis(alkylthio)carbenium salt has a non-coordinating or weakly coordinating anion, which is preferably selected from the group formed by tetrafluoroborate, hexafluorophosphate, perchlorate and perfluoroalkylsulfonate, in particular trifluoromethanesulfonate.
16. (Currently Amended) Process according to ~~one of Claims 12 to 15~~ Claim 12, characterised in that the oxidant employed is a compound which liberates halonium equivalents, preferably dimethyldibromohydantoin, N-bromosuccinimide, N-iodosuccinimide, 1,3-dibromo-5,5-dimethylhydantoin, SO_2Cl_2 , SO_2ClF , nitrosonium and nitronium salts, chloramine T or bromine, particularly preferably bromine.
17. (Currently Amended) Process according to ~~one of Claims 12 to 16~~ Claim 12, characterised in that the fluorinating agent is selected from the group formed by aliphatic and aromatic amine/hydrogen fluoride complexes, pyridine/hydrogen fluoride complexes, $NEt_3 \cdot 3HF$, 50% HF in pyridine, melamine $\cdot HF$ and polyvinylpyridine $\cdot HF$.